

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PONTA 00476 201837Z

42

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1363

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COMUSFORAZ

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0476

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZOREAN SITUATION

REF: PONTA DELGADA 475

1. HAD A LONG CONVERSATION DECEMBER 19 WITH TWO MEMBERS OF JUNTA REGIONAL, ALVARO MONJARDINO AND JOSE PACHECO DE ALMEIDA. JUNTA REGIONAL RECEIVED DETAILS OF NEW GOP DECREE ON DEFINING POWERS OF THE JUNTA. THE DECREE INTER ALIA: 1) ALLOWS THE PRIME MINISTER TO DELEGATE HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JUNTA, WHICH UNDER ORIGINAL DECREE CREATING THE JUNTA, WAS DIRECTLY UNDER HIM, TO MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE; 2) IT REDUCES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL JUNTA MEMBERS, TAKING AWAY SOME SECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AND ELIMINATING POLICY RESPONSIBILITY IN OTHERS; AND 3) SAYS THAT AUTONOMY WILL BE GRANTED BY THE GOP TO THE DISTRICTS OF THE AZORES WITHOUT MENTIONING THE JUNTA'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRODUCING A DRAFT STATUTE OF AUTONOMY.

2. ALL THE MEMBERS ARE ANGRY ABOUT THIS DECREE BECAUSE IT REDUCES THE AUTHORITY OF THE JUNTA ITSELF, IT TAKES RESPONSIBILITY AWAY FROM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PONTA 00476 201837Z

THEM PERSONALLY, AND IT REDUCES THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EXTENSIVE

AUTONOMY. THE TWO SOCIALISTS ON THE JUNTA, VARGAS AND GOULJRT ARE AS ANGRY AS THE OTHERS, AND PREPARED TO TAKE STRONG STAND.

3. ALMEIDA SAID THAT HE IS NOW GOING TO WORK WITH FLA AND HINTED THAT

JACOME CARREIRA WOULD DO THE SAME. ALMEIDA SAID THAT FOR WEEKS FLA HAS BEEN QUIET ON ORDERS OF THE JUNTA BECAUSE IT HAD FAITH IN THE JUNTA'S WORK TOWARD AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY. HE ADDED HE LONG AGO COMMITTED HIMSELF TO A PROCESS, THAT HE BELIEVES THAT EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY IS THE BEST FOR THE AZORES, BUT HE MUST REACT TO THE ACTIONS OF LISBON. HE IS AFRAID THAT IF THE JUNTA IS NOT FIRM NOW, LEADERSHIP IN THE AZORES WILL PASS TO FLA.

4. MONJARDINO IS HESITANT, APPARENTLY THE ONLY JUNTA MEMBER WHO IS. HE WAS ONE OF CHIEF DRAFTERS OF THE STATUTE OF AUTONOMY, STRONGLY BELIEVES IN AUTONOMY, BUT HE IS AFRAID OF INDEPENDENCE. HE BELIEVES INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE EASY TO ACHIEVE BUT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT IT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES, AND FEARS RIGHTIST INTERESTS MIGHT DOMINATE. HE HAS NOT MADE UP HIS MIND AND HAS NOT REJECTED THE OPTION OF INDEPENDENCE.

5. BOTH MEN MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WANTED THE USG TO UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SITUATION, AND THEY HOPED THAT THIS UNDERSTANDING WOULD BE CONVEYED TO THE GOP. I ASSURED THEM THAT I WOULD CONVEY THEIR VIEWS TO THE USG BUT DID NOT COMMENT ON PASSING THEM ON TO THE GOP. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY IS THE BEST FOR THE AZORES, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY WERE DISCUSSING ACTIONS THAT COULD LEAD TO INDEPENDENCE.

6. THE JUNTA HAS NOT MADE PUBLIC THE DETAILS OF THE NEW DECREE OR IT'S REACTION TO IT. SO FAR THE PUBLIC ONLY KNOWS THAT THE JUNTA DID NOT GET THE POWERS IT REQUESTED AND WAS HOLDING AN EMERGENCY MEETING.

7. COMMENT: THE MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA REGIONAL ARE THE MOST RESPONSIBLE LEADERS IN THE AZORES AND REALIZE MUCH MORE THAN OTHERS THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS INDEPENDENCE WOULD BRING. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO AN EXTENSIVE AUTONOMY BUT WOULD PREFER INDEPENDENCE TO A RESTRICTED AUTONOMY WHICH THEY SEE AS NO AUTONOMY AT ALL. THEY BELIEVE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PONTA 00476 201837Z

THEY MUST REACT STRONGLY TO THE GOP'S LIMITATION OF THEIR AUTHORITY OR LOSE THE CHANCE OF OBTAINING THE AUTONOMY THEY WANT, EVEN IF THEIR ACTIONS CARRY THE RISK OF INDEPENDENCE.

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